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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0421
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6757
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 9137
RUEHQ/AMEMBASSY QUITO 0364
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 003911

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: October 14 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: President Zadari's Visit, Heixiazi, North Korean Verification, Regulations for Foreign Journalists, Chinese Hackers, Chinese Tear Gas in Thailand

¶1. Key points at the October 14 afternoon MFA press briefing were:

-- China welcomes Pakistani President Zadari and looks forward to "in-depth discussions" and the signing of several "deals."

-- China regains control of half of Heixiazi Island from Russia.

-- China will "communicate and coordinate" with the parties to the Six-Party Talks process on verification of North Korea's nuclear disarmament.

-- China expects criminal acts in Tibet to be "brought to justice" by the "competent authorities" and "according to law."

-- China's policy of "openness and reform" with regard to regulations for foreign journalists will continue, although it is not clear whether or not regulations implemented during the Olympics will expire on October 17.

-- China "cannot accept" the accusation that Chinese hackers were involved in stealing state secrets from the Republic of Korea.

-- China cannot confirm reports that unusually powerful tear gas manufactured in China was used by Thai police against protesters in Thailand.

Visit of Pakistani President Zadari

¶2. At the October 14 regular MFA press briefing, spokesperson Qin Gang said that Pakistani President Zadari arrived in China today for an official visit and that this is another "important event" for the two countries. He added that China and Pakistan will conduct "in-depth discussions" in "major areas" of cooperation and plan to sign several "deals." When asked about nuclear cooperation, the spokesperson said that there is "some cooperation" on nuclear issues and this cooperation is in line with the principles of "equality and mutual benefit," respects all relevant international agreements, and meets the requirements for International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) supervision.

Return of Heixiazi Island

¶3. Qin confirmed that China regained control of half of Heixiazi Island from Russia today in an official ceremony attended by Ambassador Zhao Xidi. Qin noted that the smooth transition of control was an example of how negotiation was "an effective approach to settling complicated issues." When asked to compare the return of Heixiazi to the return of Hong Kong and Macau to China, Qin said that "from the perspective of politics and law" the various situations were different and therefore could not be compared.

North Korea - Verification and Economic Assistance

¶ 14. When asked what role China would play in the verification of North Korea's nuclear disarmament, Qin responded that as far as the Six-Party Talks process was concerned, China will continue to assert "constructive efforts" and is "ready to work with other parties to "maintain cooperation" and continue to "play a constructive role." As for the verification issue, Qin added that China will "communicate and coordinate" with other parties.

¶ 15. Responding to a question about a recent report indicating China would increase economic cooperation with North Korea, Qin said that he was not aware of the report, but that China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) enjoy "normal trade relations" and that China will "provide assistance" to the DPRK within its "capability."

Dalai Lama involved in Tibetan attacks?

¶ 16. When pressed about whether or not China suspected the Dalai Lama to be behind an attack for which eight monks in Tibet were recently convicted, Qin stated that China administers the country "according to law" and that criminal acts must be "brought to justice" by the "competent authorities" who will then "handle the case according to law."

New Regulations for Foreign Journalists

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¶ 17. When commenting on new regulations for foreign journalists, Qin pointed out that questions on this issue had been "repeatedly answered" and that China will "continue its policy of openness and reform." He added that China will also continue to "facilitate" the work of foreign journalists in China and that this policy will "stay unchanged." When pressed about whether or not the specific regulations for foreign journalists implemented during the Olympics would expire on October 17, Qin told the reporter to "look at your watch and see today's date."

Hackers from China?

¶ 18. Responding to a reporter's claim that the Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea (ROK) had accused North Korean and Chinese hackers of stealing state secrets, and that close to 130,000 pieces of information had been stolen over the past four years, Qin emphasized that China opposes all forms of cyber crime and that China was also a "victim" of hackers. He stressed that China therefore "cannot accept this accusation" and that if the ROK were to make such a claim it would have to provide "evidence."

Tear gas in Thailand

¶ 19. Qin was unable to confirm reports that Thai police had used unusually powerful tear gas manufactured in China to quell recent riots in Thailand, but pointed out that he was not aware of any international convention prohibiting countries from using tear gas in such a situation.

Ecuadorian Defense Minister

¶ 10. When asked about the visit of the Ecuadorian Defense Minister to China, Qin said that China considered Ecuador a "friendly country" and that it "attached importance to communication and exchange" with Ecuador. He indicated that specific questions about the visit should be directed to the Ministry of Defense.

Hu to Visit Costa Rica

¶11. Qin announced that at the invitation of President Arias of Costa Rica, President Hu Jintao will visit Costa Rica in conjunction with his trip to Peru to attend the upcoming Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in mid-November.

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